

Toward Broader Volunteer Engagement:

Report from Focus Groups for the Assessing Diversity and Equity in Volunteer Inclusion Study

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October 2023

Assessing Diversity and Equity in Volunteer Inclusion (ADEVI) is a partnership between **Arizona State University** (ASU) and the **Council for Certification in Volunteer Administration** (CCVA). **Faiza Venzant**, co-principal investigator for the study, facilitated our contact with CVAs and provided guidance on focus group content and prompts.



Three ASU graduate students spearheaded the focus group administration and execution. **Kelly Rutt** served as captain, including scheduling and communication with hosts and participants. Kelly was joined by **Teresa Oswald** and **Suzette Major** in hosting focus groups and transcribing their contents.

Five Certified Volunteer Administrators volunteered to serve as moderators and facilitators of focus groups. Special thanks to **Julie Hernandez, Brenda Michael-Haggard, Sarah Phillipe, Amanda Power, and Eileen Small** for providing this important service to the ADEVI project.

The ADEVI project is sponsored by **AmeriCorps** (the operating name of the Corporation for National and Community Service), as a member of its 2022–2025 National Service and Civic Engagement Research cohort. Opinions or points of view expressed in this report are those of the author and focus group participants. Any claims herein do not necessarily reflect the official position of, or a position that is endorsed by, AmeriCorps or its Office of Research and Evaluation.



Citation: Hager, M.A. (2023). *Toward Broader Volunteer Engagement: Report from Focus Groups for the Assessing Diversity and Equity in Volunteer Inclusion Study*. Research Report: Arizona State University.

DOI: 10.6084/m9.figshare.24233692

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ADEVI Focus Groups: Context and Introduction

In 2020 and 2021, I worked with Faiza Venzant at the Council for Certification in Volunteer Administration on a study of technology adoption by volunteer administrators during the pandemic. As it wrapped up, Faiza said to me, “This project has been interesting enough, but what the field really needs is a snapshot on the diversity of the field of volunteer administrators and the inclusiveness of the organizations their volunteers work in. That’s a real leverage point for the field.”

Fast forward a year, when AmeriCorps requested proposals for new research projects on civic engagement. I remembered Faiza’s suggestion and I invited her to a new collaboration to advance her ideas. “Assessing Diversity and Equity in Volunteer Inclusion” (ADEVI) was born.

Why study diversity, equity, and inclusion in volunteerism and volunteer administration? Why encourage it? The answers to those questions start with the observation that citizen engagement with community life is important not only to individual citizens, but also to the faithful functioning of democracy. If people do not engage, their lives are less colorful and the broader social fabric is less vibrant. People do not connect and learn to solve community problems.

We like to think that everybody has equal opportunity and enthusiasm to participate in community life, but that is not the case. Volunteerism is more inviting to people who look or act a particular way. Organization leaders or cultures are sometimes less inviting to people who are not white, or less educated, or neurodivergent, or gay, or politically conservative, or otherwise different from the mass of others engaged with a cause. These people are sometimes made to feel their difference, so they stop volunteering, or never start. Civic engagement and democracy take a step backwards.

Do voluntary organizations care about equity and inclusion when it comes to their volunteers? What are they doing about it? What issues do they confront in trying to make their organizations more inviting? **To shed some lights on these big questions, we talked with volunteer managers who have taken the step of gaining a certification in volunteer administration, the “CVA.”** This report is about what we learned from those conversations.

Some details: We asked 950 CVAs to fill out a survey, and 564 did so. Of that group, 174 told us they might be interested in further conversations in focus groups. From May to June, 2023, 105 CVAs participated in 21 online focus groups. Groups ranged from three to eight participants, averaging 5.2 per focus group. The one-hour conversations were each recorded and transcribed.

The results presented in the following pages are Mark Hager’s sole effort at sorting themes across more than 400 pages of focus group transcripts. Other people and processes might emphasize different themes, but my process was systematic. First, I worked through each focus group transcript and described three to six themes in a given conversation. Then, armed with 21 sets of theme groups, I sorted and pared down to the 10 observations that you see here. **These are the dominant messages and themes that emerged from the ADEVI focus groups.**

1. Voluntary organizations often lack specific policies for recruiting diverse volunteers, leaving implementation to volunteer administrators.

Voluntary organizations, including both nonprofit organizations and government agencies that engage volunteers, play a vital role in bridging societal gaps and addressing community needs. However, despite the importance of having diverse voices in their volunteer base, many voluntary organizations lack concrete policies for recruiting diverse volunteers. This gap often leaves the responsibility of implementation on the shoulders of volunteer administrators, presenting both challenges and opportunities.

• The Policy Gap

The absence of explicit diversity recruitment policies in many voluntary organizations is a recurring theme in the focus groups. While some organizations may possess a general statement asserting that they recruit volunteers from all backgrounds, the reality is that these declarations often lack specific actionable steps. For instance, one hospice CVA mentioned, **"I don't feel like we really have a specific policy of recruiting people of other backgrounds. It is stated... But I really feel like it's up to me."** This sentiment underscores the nebulous nature of diversity recruitment endeavors in many voluntary organizations.

• The Role of Volunteer Administrators

The onus of diversifying the volunteer base, given the lack of specific organizational policies, typically falls on volunteer administrators. These individuals often find themselves at the front line, striving to implement inclusive practices in the absence of structured guidance. Another CVA puts it this way: **"I would say we worked on certain aspects of it... we have a diversity statement, we have this, we have that... but I think implementation is a whole another ball game."** Administrators often face the challenge of translating broad organizational values into actionable strategies.

• Institutional Challenges

The journey towards diversifying the volunteer base is fraught with institutional challenges. Organizations may not always be prepared to confront the truths about their existing practices, which may sometimes be misaligned with the stated goals. One focus group participant put it this way: **"I just don't think my organization at this moment is ready for that conversation... it would be just basically saying that we're not doing enough."** This highlights the potential discord between organizational aspirations and the realities of diversity recruitment.

• The Way Forward

While the challenges are evident, there is also an opportunity for volunteer administrators to lead the change. By actively seeking to understand and address barriers to diversity, advocating for clearer policies, and fostering an inclusive environment, these administrators can play a pivotal role in shaping a more inclusive future for volunteer programs.

2. Some voluntary organizations have a stated objective of creating a more inclusive environment, and some collect demographic data for this goal.

In recent years, the voluntary sector has witnessed an increased emphasis on inclusivity. Recognizing the diverse nature of the communities they serve, many of these organizations are making concerted efforts to create more inclusive environments. A significant component of this journey toward inclusivity is the collection and analysis of demographic data.

• Embracing Inclusivity

Voluntary organizations are gradually understanding the value of having diverse voices in both their volunteer base and staff. This shift isn't just about representation; it's about ensuring that the solutions and initiatives put forth by the organization resonate with and address the unique needs of every segment of the community. One voice in focus groups noted that **“when it comes to gender identity we talk about in our orientation, and we put into our volunteer application what pronouns they use.”** As organizations strive to build bridges and foster connections, creating an inclusive environment becomes imperative.

• The Role of Demographic Data

To understand where they currently stand and identify gaps, many voluntary organizations have started collecting demographic data. This data provides insights into the diverse characteristics of their volunteers, thereby helping organizations gauge their reach and inclusivity. As one of the focus group participants mentioned, **“A few years ago, we began the journey of collecting demographic data for our volunteers. It was an enlightening exercise that showed us the areas we were lacking in.”**

• Challenges in Data Collection

While collecting demographic data is a step in the right direction, it's not without challenges. Organizations must ensure that the data collection process is respectful and considerate. There's also the challenge of interpreting this data correctly and using it to inform strategies without perpetuating stereotypes or biases. Said one CVA, **“We just started collecting demographic data. There was pushback with that, but I think we're persevered through that. It's now on our forms. I'm starting to see some of that data coming in.”**

• Benefits Beyond Numbers

Collecting demographic data isn't just about statistics; it's about stories and understanding lived experiences. By delving into this data, voluntary organizations can gain insights into the challenges, aspirations, and needs of their volunteers and the communities they serve. This deeper understanding can pave the way for more tailored and effective programs.

• The Way Forward

As voluntary organizations continue on their journey toward greater inclusivity, demographic data will play a crucial role. However, data alone isn't the answer. It needs to be coupled with genuine efforts to understand, engage with, and address the diverse needs of the community. By doing so, these workplaces can ensure that they not only talk the talk but also walk the walk when it comes to inclusivity.

3. Intentionality in promoting diversity varies; some organizations prioritize it while others focus on volunteer roles and specific event needs.

The emphasis on diversity in volunteer engagement takes various forms, with the approach to promoting inclusivity differing significantly across workplaces. The degree of intentionality with which organizations pursue diversity goals can vary, with some placing it at the forefront of their mission, while others adopt a more role-specific or event-centric approach.

- **Prioritizing Diversity as a Core Value**

Some voluntary organizations have recognized the inherent value of having a diverse representation, not just as a reactive measure but as a proactive strategic imperative. For these workplaces, diversity isn't merely a box to be ticked but is intertwined with their core values and mission. They invest in outreach programs, partnerships, and initiatives specifically designed to attract a diverse volunteer base. The goal is to mirror the communities they serve, ensuring that every voice is heard and represented. Noted one CVA, **“it was like a day one thing that we were all in agreement with, that we needed to diversify the geographical location of our volunteers the age, the background, and really like a diversity of positions and ideas about wildlife, conservation, and coexistence with humans.”**

- **Role-Centric Approach to Diversity**

Conversely, certain volunteer settings view diversity through the lens of specific volunteer roles. Their intentionality in promoting diversity is often contingent on the requirements of a particular role or function. For instance, an organization might actively seek volunteers from a particular ethnic community for a role that requires language skills specific to that community. While this approach addresses immediate needs, it may not always translate to a holistic emphasis on diversity.

- **Event-Driven Diversity Efforts**

Other organizations might pivot their diversity efforts based on specific events or projects. For example, during an event focused on celebrating a particular culture or community, there might be an active push to engage volunteers from that background. While this ensures authenticity and representation for the event, it might not guarantee sustained diversity efforts beyond that particular occasion.

- **The Way Forward**

For the voluntary sector to truly harness the power of diversity, there's a need for a shift in perspective. While role-specific and event-centric approaches have their merits, a more consistent and holistic emphasis on diversity can yield more significant benefits. Organizations can consider blending these approaches, ensuring that while they meet immediate needs, they also build a foundation for sustained and meaningful inclusivity. Leadership is key: **“Inclusion work has really been easier to do because the organization as a whole on the national level is already committed to diversity, equity, inclusion and justice.”**

4. Organizations report a desire to prioritize equity and inclusion through training and fostering of anti-discrimination cultures.

To truly champion change, promote community welfare, and represent the voices of all, focus group participants articulated the need to embed equity and inclusion in their organizational fabric. This requires intentional efforts through comprehensive training and a persistent commitment to improving organizational culture.

- **Training: The Bedrock of Inclusion**

Participants suggest that training serves as a foundational step in promoting equity and inclusion. Regular and comprehensive training sessions can help volunteers and staff recognize unconscious biases, understand the value of diverse perspectives, and learn to interact with sensitivity and respect. One CVA in focus groups: **“My current job has a very intentional dedicated focus to diversity, equity, and inclusion. We do staff trainings -- it's very, very intentional focus.”** Such training should not be a one-off event but an ongoing process, reflecting the evolving understanding of equity and inclusion.

- **Fostering an Anti-Discrimination Culture**

Beyond training and policies, the true test of an organization's commitment to equity and inclusion lies in its culture. It's imperative to foster an environment where discrimination, in any form, is not tolerated. This involves not just punitive measures for discriminatory actions but also proactive steps like celebrating diversity, promoting dialogue, and ensuring representation at all levels.

- **The Benefits of Prioritizing Equity and Inclusion**

Organizations that genuinely prioritize equity and inclusion stand to gain traction in their communities. Such organizations reflect the true spirit of those they serve, harnessing diverse perspectives for richer problem-solving and innovation. They also enjoy enhanced trust and credibility, essential for voluntary organizations reliant on community support and donations.

- **The Way Forward**

The path to genuine equity and inclusion is a continuous journey, not a destination. It requires introspection, openness to feedback, and the flexibility to adapt. A commitment to training and culture is vital: **“So for staff, we've had trainings, and we just hired our senior director of diversity, equity, and inclusion. We're excited to have that person on board and hopefully start supporting our volunteer community more in the future, too.”** As society's understanding of equity and inclusion evolves, so must the efforts of its voluntary organizations. Through consistent training, steadfast policies, and a nurturing culture, organizations can ensure that they stand as beacons of equity and inclusivity.

5. Success in fostering diverse volunteer environments often comes from top-level leadership commitment to diversity.

The push for diverse and inclusive volunteer environments in voluntary organizations is more than just a fad. The success of such endeavors often hinges on the commitment and proactive involvement of top-level leadership. Their dedication sets the tone for the entire organization, creating an environment where diversity is not just accepted but celebrated.

• The Ripple Effect of Leadership Commitment

The commitment of organizational leaders towards fostering diversity has a cascading effect throughout the organization. When top executives and board members prioritize and visibly support diversity initiatives, it sends a clear message to all stakeholders—be it staff, volunteers, or other stakeholders—that diversity is a core organizational value. This top-down approach ensures that diversity efforts are not relegated to mere tokenism but are ingrained in the organization's ethos.

• Translating Commitment into Action

Leadership's commitment to diversity should manifest in tangible actions. This could include revising recruitment strategies, allocating funds for diversity training, or setting up committees to address diversity-related challenges. Actions, more than words, resonate with volunteers and staff, solidifying their belief in the organization's dedication to inclusivity. One CVA comments on their progress: **“For us, it was intentional centering on equity, diversity, inclusion, decision making, governance and day-to-day interaction. Would I say that we are good at it yet? No. But for the organization, it's made a priority.”**

• The Benefits of Leadership-Driven Diversity

An organization that benefits from leadership-driven diversity initiatives enjoys several advantages. A diverse volunteer environment offers a variety of perspectives, leading to innovative solutions. Moreover, such organizations tend to resonate better with the communities they serve, fostering trust and ensuring broader community engagement.

• The Path Ahead

Creating and maintaining a diverse volunteer environment is a continuous process. It requires persistent efforts, regular introspection, and the flexibility to adapt. Leadership's unwavering commitment, combined with a thirst for knowledge, can guide voluntary organizations on this fulfilling journey, ensuring that every voice is heard, valued, and empowered.

6. Diversity among volunteers can expand an organization's reach, fostering respect and cultural competency.

For many voluntary organizations, the push for diversity has become a strategic imperative. Embracing diversity among volunteers can enhance an organization's reach and effectiveness. Beyond operational advantages, a diverse volunteer base fosters an environment of mutual respect and cultural understanding, pillars for any organization striving to make a meaningful impact.

• Expanding Organizational Reach

A diverse group of volunteers brings along a rich tapestry of backgrounds, experiences, and networks. This diversity translates into an expanded reach for the organization. Whether it's penetrating new community segments, accessing varied donor pools, or simply understanding the multifaceted challenges of different demographic groups, a diverse volunteer base acts as a bridge to previously uncharted territories. Noted one CVA, **“the key there is variety and the diversity, so the challenges is retraining our mindset to not rely so heavily on word of mouth recruitment only, but to increase the efforts elsewhere.”**

• Fostering Mutual Respect

In an environment where diversity is celebrated, respect becomes a natural byproduct. When volunteers from different backgrounds work together toward a common goal, they gain insights into each other's worlds. This mutual understanding paves the way for respect, not just based on shared objectives but also on recognizing and valuing individual differences.

• Cultivating Cultural Competency

Cultural competency goes beyond mere tolerance or acceptance. It entails a deep understanding and appreciation of cultural differences, rooted in direct experiences and interactions. This continuous exposure cultivates cultural competency, enabling volunteers and, by extension, the organization to interact more effectively with diverse communities. One focus group participant observed, **“when the majority of our staff members are white, probably cisgender, it makes it a little bit difficult to recruit in more areas where folks might feel uncomfortable. So if we can, if we can try to break down those barriers, I think it'll help us reach more volunteers as well.”**

• The Ripple Effects of Diversity

The benefits of a diverse volunteer base reverberate beyond the organization's immediate functions. Volunteers carry their experiences, learnings, and interactions back to their personal and professional circles. This creates a ripple effect, subtly influencing and educating a broader audience about the value of diversity and cultural competency. Organizations need to actively seek out and engage volunteers from varied backgrounds, ensuring that their outreach and recruitment strategies are inclusive. Moreover, fostering an environment where diversity is not just acknowledged but celebrated is crucial.

7. Voluntary organizations have diverse strategies for volunteer recruitment; some unintentionally attract volunteers mirroring the staff.

Recruitment is a central piece of volunteer administration. The strategies employed to attract and engage volunteers are as diverse as the voluntary organizations themselves. However, an intriguing pattern emerges in certain workplaces: the unintentional attraction of volunteers whose demographics and backgrounds closely mirror those of the staff. While this can foster cohesion and shared understanding, it may inadvertently limit the diversity and reach of the organization.

- **The Mirroring Phenomenon**

According to several focus group participants, volunteer recruitment processes, whether intentional or not, tend to draw individuals who closely resemble the characteristics of existing staff. This 'mirroring' can be attributed to various factors: existing staff networks, recruitment channels, or even the organizational culture and ethos. As one CVA noted, **“While such volunteers might seamlessly integrate into the organization, the lack of diversity can present challenges in the long run. Our volunteers don’t look like the community we serve.”**

- **The Unintended Consequences**

When volunteers predominantly mirror the staff, it can lead to a homogenized perspective. Such a scenario might restrict the organization's ability to understand and cater to diverse community needs. It might well also exclude certain community segments from volunteering opportunities, thereby limiting the organization's reach.

- **Broader Recruitment Strategies**

To counter the mirroring effect and cultivate a diverse volunteer base, voluntary organizations might adopt broader, more inclusive recruitment strategies. This could involve partnering with diverse community organizations, engaging in outreach programs targeting varied demographic groups, or leveraging diverse media channels for recruitment campaigns.

- **Charting the Path Forward**

For voluntary organizations to harness the benefits of a diverse volunteer base, introspection is key. Organizations need to critically evaluate their recruitment strategies, identifying any inadvertent biases or patterns leading to the mirroring effect. By actively seeking diversity and ensuring that their outreach efforts are inclusive, voluntary organizations can ensure that they not only serve a diverse community but are also represented by one.

8. Barriers to diversity include income disparities, time commitments, location, and specific volunteer roles.

The pursuit of diversity in voluntary organizations is often met with a range of challenges. While the benefits of a diverse volunteer base are well recognized – from richer perspectives to greater community resonance – there exist tangible barriers that impede such inclusivity. Income disparities, time constraints, geographical locations, and the very nature of certain volunteer roles often act as roadblocks in the path to achieving true diversity.

• Income Disparities

One of the most pronounced barriers to diversity is the economic divide. Individuals from lower-income backgrounds may find it challenging to volunteer, especially if the role doesn't offer any stipends or if there are associated costs (e.g., transportation, attire, or equipment). Such financial constraints can deter potential volunteers, leading to a skewed representation of affluent volunteers in certain organizations.

• Time Commitments

The time required for volunteer roles can also pose a significant barrier. Individuals working multiple jobs, single parents, or those with caregiving responsibilities might find it challenging to commit to extended or inflexible volunteering hours. The expectation of long-term commitment or rigid schedules can inadvertently exclude those who cannot afford to allocate such time, despite their willingness to contribute.

• Geographical Location

Location plays a pivotal role in volunteer engagement. Organizations situated in areas not easily accessible by public transport, or those in regions far from residential communities, may struggle to attract a diverse volunteer base. Moreover, if the target community for diversity resides in a specific locale, the organization's distance from that area can pose challenges. Noted one CVA, **“one thing that we were all in agreement with is that we needed to diversify the geographical location of our volunteers, as well as their age, their backgrounds, and their diversity of positions and ideas.”**

• Specific Nature of Volunteer Roles

The very essence of certain volunteer roles can be a barrier to diversity. Roles that require specialized skills, training, or qualifications might limit participation to only those who possess such prerequisites. Additionally, roles that demand physical exertion or those in challenging environments might not be feasible for everyone, further narrowing the pool of potential volunteers.

9. There's more: Other barriers to diverse volunteers include language accessibility, stringent requirements, and cultural challenges.

Barriers to increasing diversity and inclusion among volunteers was a central discussion in the focus groups. Deficits in diversity and inclusion requires understanding the barriers and formulating strategies to overcome them. From language accessibility to specific requirements and cultural nuances, the challenges are multifaceted.

- **Language Accessibility: Beyond Communication**

Language barriers extend beyond mere communication challenges. They can impede understanding, integration, and effective participation. Non-native speakers or those not fluent in the organization's primary language often find it difficult to fully engage, leading to potential feelings of exclusion or ineffectiveness.

- **Stringent Requirements: Unintended Gatekeeping**

While certain volunteer roles necessitate specific qualifications or skills, overly stringent or narrow requirements can unintentionally act as barriers. Such prerequisites might exclude individuals from diverse backgrounds who, despite not meeting the exact criteria, could bring valuable perspectives and skills to the table.

- **Cultural Challenges: Navigating Nuances**

Cultural differences encompass more than just customs or traditions. They include communication styles, decision-making approaches, and even perceptions of volunteering. Without a deep understanding of these nuances, organizations might inadvertently create environments that feel alien or unwelcoming to volunteers from diverse cultural backgrounds.

- **Charting a Path Towards Inclusivity**

Addressing the diversity deficit requires a multi-pronged approach, but not many are fully ready to engage. One CVA in focus groups is not optimistic: **“Institutional barriers to the recruitment process, the onboarding and how we manage and support our volunteers – I just don't think my organization at this moment is ready for that conversation. I think it would take a lot of hand-holding and a lot of support.”**

10. Still more: Barriers to diversity include historical norms, financial barriers, and the need for greater emphasis on inclusion practices.

If diversity and inclusion were easy, more organizations would make headway in expanding their reach into their communities. Deep-rooted historical norms, financial constraints, and a sometimes-limited emphasis on comprehensive diversity, equity, and inclusion practices present significant hurdles. Focus group participants discussed three final points that represent barriers to progress.

• Historical Norms: The Shadow of the Past

Historical norms and practices can have a lingering effect on volunteer recruitment and engagement. In many organizations, past approaches to volunteerism might have catered predominantly to specific demographics, inadvertently excluding others. One focus group participant noted that in her organization, **“historically speaking, a majority of our volunteers are retired, and we tend to gravitate towards what's worked in the past.”** Shifting away from these established norms requires conscious effort, a reevaluation of recruitment strategies, and sometimes, a change in organizational culture.

• Financial Barriers: The Cost of Volunteering

While volunteering is often viewed as selfless, it is not devoid of costs. Potential expenses, such as transportation, attire, training materials, or even missed work hours can deter individuals from lower-income backgrounds. Noted one CVA, **“low income causes some people not to become volunteers. Some organizations charge for background checks. Some require vaccinations, and the trips, to get all those. If they're not financially able to take off work and get all these background checks and vaccinations done, if they don't have a car, that takes a lot of resources just to onboard.”** Addressing these financial barriers is essential to ensure that volunteering is accessible to all, regardless of their economic status.

• The Diversity Imperative: Beyond Tokenism

While many organizations express commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, the actual implementation can sometimes fall short. Tokenistic efforts or superficial measures are insufficient to foster genuine diversity. A comprehensive equity approach involves regular training, feedback mechanisms, policy reviews, and continuous engagement with diverse communities.

• Overcoming these Barriers

While these challenges are substantial, they are not insurmountable. Voluntary organizations can take proactive steps to mitigate these barriers. Offering flexible volunteering hours, providing financial aid or reimbursements, organizing transportation facilities, and offering training for specialized roles are just a few measures that can make volunteering more accessible to a diverse audience.

Focus Group Wrap-Up

Efforts Towards Inclusivity

Many voluntary organizations are wanting to transition toward more inclusive environments. One of the steps includes collecting demographic data. This data aids in understanding the current diversity landscape and identifying areas needing more emphasis. However, the practice varies, with some voluntary organizations collecting extensive information, while others focus only on aspects like gender pronouns or language skills.

The Role of Leadership

Top-level commitment from leadership is often a distinguishing factor in successful diversity initiatives. When leaders prioritize and actively promote diversity, it resonates through the organization. Prioritizing diversity, equity, and inclusion requires intentional efforts, including training, crafting inclusive policies, and fostering an anti-discriminatory culture.

Volunteer Recruitment Strategies

Voluntary organizations deploy a range of recruitment strategies. However, without a conscious effort towards diversity, many end up attracting volunteers that mirror their existing staff demographics, or majority culture. It's essential to diversify recruitment channels and intentionally reach out to under-represented groups.

Barriers to Diversity

Several challenges hinder the achievement of diversity. Income disparities often dictate who can afford to volunteer, especially when unpaid. Time commitments, geographical location, and the nature of specific volunteer roles can further deter a diverse pool of potential volunteers. Additionally, challenges such as training availability, language barriers, and accessibility issues can disproportionately impact certain demographics. Historical norms, financial barriers, and prior experiences of discrimination can deter potential volunteers from diverse backgrounds. Addressing these requires both systemic changes and a shift in organizational culture.

Achieving diversity in volunteer teams requires concerted, intentional efforts:

- **Policy Formation:** Clearly defined policies for volunteer recruitment, emphasizing diversity, can provide a consistent framework for volunteer administrators.
- **Data Collection:** Gathering and analyzing demographic data can guide targeted recruitment efforts.
- **Training:** Mandatory training sessions on diversity, equity, and inclusion can ensure volunteers and staff understand and prioritize these principles.
- **Community Engagement:** Collaborating with community leaders and organizations can offer insights into better engagement with diverse groups.
- **Review and Update:** Regularly reviewing and updating policies and practices, with a focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion ensures they remain relevant and effective.

Incorporating these recommendations can aid voluntary organizations in moving toward a more inclusive, diverse, and effective volunteer base, better reflecting the communities they serve.